



Florida House of Representatives
Democratic Office

Franklin Sands
Democratic Leader

Geraldine F. Thompson
Democratic Leader Pro Tempore

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CONTACT: Mark Hollis
(850) 488-9622

HOUSE REPUBLICANS REFUSE FEDERAL FUNDS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

TALLAHASSEE, FL --- Florida House Republican leaders voted along party lines today and refused a House Democratic-sponsored proposal that would have helped Florida obtain approximately \$444 million in economic recovery stimulus money for the state's Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

State Representative Kevin J. G. Rader (D-Delray Beach) presented an amendment to Senate Bill 810 that would have helped Florida obtain these economic recovery stimulus monies for the state's Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

But in an arrogant political maneuver, House Republican Leader Adam Hasner (R-Delray Beach) led the opposition and described the funds for hard-working Floridians as "a handout."

The move came on a day on which even Alaska's Republican Governor Sarah Palin, a former vice presidential candidate, accepted similar economic recovery assistance for unemployed people in her state.

In only recent days, The St. Petersburg Times' Editorial Board has decried the House Republican position. The Times said: "With Florida's unemployment rate a 30-year high, it's impossible to fathom why state lawmakers may forgo collecting \$444 million in federal unemployment compensation for those out of work. But that is what the Legislature's cold-hearted Republican leadership is poised to do as the annual session winds to a dismal close."

Numerous House Democrats spoke in favor of Rader's proposal. Among them: State Representative Adam Fetterman (D-Port St. Lucie).

"We are playing politics with the lives of people back home. If you have people back home who are struggling to make ends meet, then you have to support this," said Representative Fetterman. "These dollars will help people to stay alive, to stay in their homes, and will provide food for their families."

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